Diocese of Rochester
called together

# ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

## for the Archdeacon of Rochester

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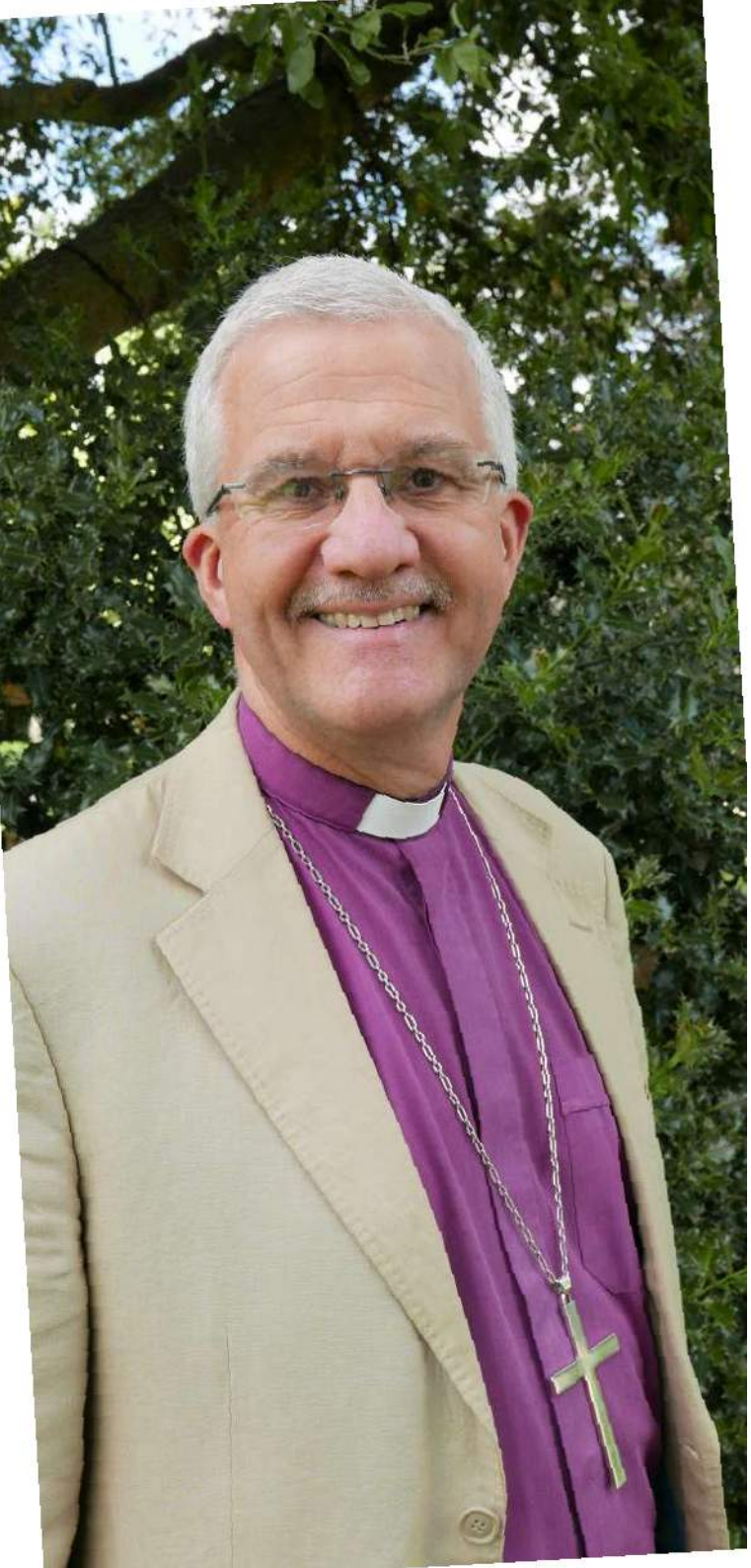


# A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JONATHAN

Welcome to the Diocese of Rochester and thank you for your interest in these exciting roles. Our three Archdeacons play a vital part in shaping and implementing our Diocesan vision and in helping to ensure that our churches flourish and God's kingdom grows among our wonderfully diverse communities.

As a Diocese we share the vision that we are Called Together to change, serve and grow the church across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Much work has taken place to understand what these three themes mean for the life of the Diocese and our priorities, and to define what and where resources will need to be allocated to deliver them.

Through prayerful engagement and discernment, what has begun to emerge is an understanding that we are a community:

**Seeking first the Kingdom of God, and called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage and creativity.**

- **Change** is about the need for us to adapt in a changing world, so that our churches can play their full part in serving God and drawing people once more to faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Serve** is about the attitude we need to adopt if we are to earn and gain that cherished place in people's hearts and at the heart of our communities.
- **Grow** is about what God wants to bring about in us and through us, as people growing into the likeness of Christ, and as churches where people are being drawn to follow Jesus through our words and through our deeds.

**Our objectives**

Within this overall vision, our emerging key objectives are to grow missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples, that are:

- Growing younger and more diverse
- Growing spiritually and numerically
- Impacting their communities
- Releasing financial resources for mission
- Planting and growing new missional churches
- Creating a safe and healthy culture for all

This is the latest phase in developing our strategic plans, which are vital to our seeking to grow the kingdom of God across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Central to these plans is sustaining and growing a flourishing and well-resourced parish structure, so as to enable our local churches to take their full and rightful place at the heart of their communities: serving God and serving the people, loving God and showing his love in and to our communities.

If this vision excites you and you believe God may be calling you to be one of our new Archdeacons, then we would love to hear from you.

With prayers and best wishes,

*+ Jonathan,*

The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs
Bishop of Rochester

Rochester Riverside School opening

# THE ARCHDEACONRY OF ROCHESTER

The Archdeaconry of Rochester covers the Medway Unitary Authority, the Boroughs of Gravesham and Dartford and the northern part of Sevenoaks Borough.

These communities lie on the southern side of the Thames Estuary (which has shaped much of their history). The area is defined in many ways by transport. In addition to the river, the A2/M2, HS1 and other railway lines run the length of the Archdeaconry; the Dartford Thames Crossing lies at the west end of the Archdeaconry; the proposed Lower Thames Crossing will be in the middle of the Archdeaconry just to the east of Gravesend.

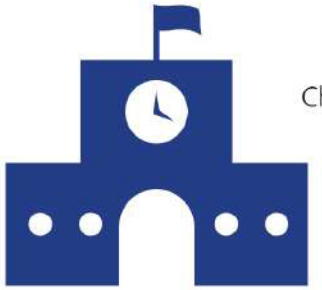
The Archdeaconry has six deaneries, 56 benefices, encompassing 61 parishes and some 85 churches/congregations. Thirteen benefices have more than one church/parish. There are some 64 stipendiary posts (excluding training curacies), of which six are less than full-time. There are five self-supporting clergy in substantive roles and another four in training curacies, and a number of employed youth and children's workers. There are also healthcare, prison, university, retail and other chaplaincies within the area.

Among the clergy and parishes in the Archdeaconry, a range of ecclesial traditions are to be found. In four parishes, episcopal oversight is shared with the Bishop of Richborough.

There are 24 Church of England schools in the Archdeaconry, of which a number are set within two Church of England Multi-Academy Trusts (of which the Archdeacon of Rochester is an ex-officio member). In many places there are also excellent links between the churches and community schools/academies.

As elsewhere, the pattern of schools is changing

# ROCHESTER ARCHDEACONRY IN NUMBERS



Church schools

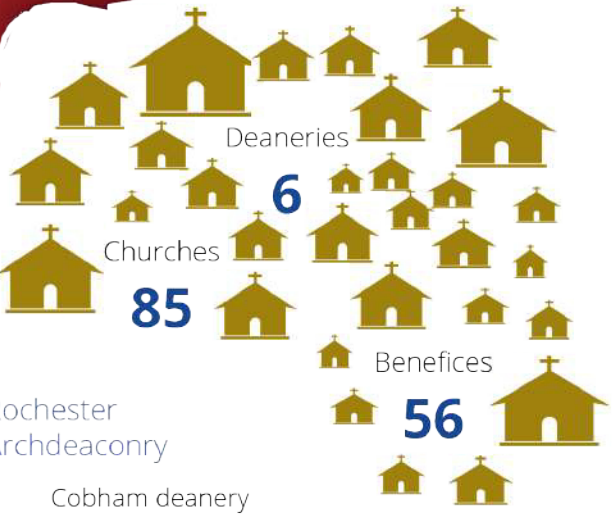
**26**

Population

**541,116**

Contribution through Parish Offers

**£1.48M**



Deaneries

**6**

Churches

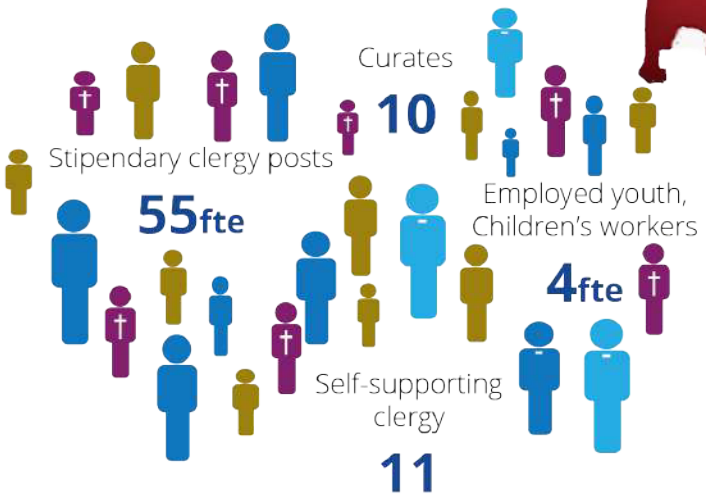
**85**

Benefices

**56**

Rochester Archdeaconry

- Cobham deanery
- Dartford deanery
- Gillingham deanery
- Gravesend deanery
- Rochester deanery
- Strood deanery



Stipendary clergy posts

**55fte**

Curates

**10**

Employed youth, Children's workers

**4fte**

Self-supporting clergy

**11**



Source: Population Census 2021 and Clergy and Financial figures 2023

significantly through academisation and other developments. New housing areas (see below) mean that new schools are needed; a new Church of England Free School at Rochester Riverside has recently opened and new Church of England schools are being built at Cable Wharf and Alkerden as part of Ebbsfleet Garden City.

The parishes of the Archdeaconry serve a population of some 500,000 (out of 1.3 million in the whole Diocese) of which over half is within the Medway Unitary Authority. Projections suggest that this will increase steadily with a 25 per cent increase across the Diocese projected for the next 25 years. Within the Archdeaconry of Rochester, much of this will be focussed within the area of the Ebbsfleet City development (see below), but new housing is a significant factor across the whole of the archdeaconry with focal developments at Dartford, Hoo Peninsula, Rochester Riverside and Gillingham Pier.

Much of the Archdeaconry of Rochester is clearly urban and suburban in character, with much more sparsely populated communities on the Hoo Peninsular and in the Cobham Deanery. As with other coastal areas, the Archdeaconry contains some significant areas of deprivation with Luton/Chatham among the most severely deprived wards in the south-east of England, with many of the issues arising from the closure of previous centres of employment such as the Royal Dockyard.

Issues of debt, homelessness and mental ill-health are among the presenting social concerns, and there are church-related initiatives in these areas supported by our diocesan Community Engagement Team. Much of the newer housing in the area is attracting somewhat more affluent residents, with good numbers commuting to London for work or engaged with the Medway University Campus on which three universities have a presence. The Archdeacon is a member of the Chaplaincy Board and line manages the chaplain.

In many ways, this Archdeaconry is the most complex of our three, with the Archdeacon having a key role in a number of initiatives, including Ebbsfleet and Chatham. In relation to these initiatives, the Archdeacon works closely with other members of diocesan staff including the Diocesan Secretary and the relevant Area Deans. Some key initiatives within the Archdeaconry include the following:

- In the town centre of **Chatham**, an area of particular social and economic challenge, we are seeking to renew Christian presence with a focussed 're-missioning' initiative.

  This project is seeing exciting and indeed challenging levels of growth. With support from the Church Commissioners as well as diocesan funding, we have appointed two missional priests to lead the initiative and opened a Church Army Centre of Mission. With support from a nearby parish, a new congregation has been planted. Work is currently underway to re-order and repair St John's Church building in the town centre, which had been closed and unused for several years.

  The initiative is now defined and authorised through a Bishop's Mission Order, with oversight through a Project Board and Church Army Centre of Mission Steering Group which are both chaired by the Archdeacon.

- **Ebbsfleet Garden City** is being built in north-west Kent around Ebbsfleet International Station and Bluewater Shopping Centre. With a likely new population in excess of 40,000 over the next 10-15 years, development is now underway with some new housing already completed.

  In liaison with the Development Corporation, developers, local authorities, ecumenical partners and others, we are already well engaged in planning for missionary, pastoral and community-shaping presence in the area. A new Deanery around the new development is in planning and a new BMO will be established.

  This work is also overseen through a Project Board chaired by the Archdeacon.

- Significant new housing is planned on the **Hoo Peninsula** and this may require pastoral reorganisation and the revitalisation of the Hoo Group of Churches.

Aerial view of St George, Gravesend parish

# THE ROLE

Give attention to personal prayer, study of the scriptures, theological reflection, preparation for preaching and worship and a rhythm of sabbath rest.

- Report to, and speak on behalf of, the Bishop in archdeaconry and designated wider matters
- Build good relationships across the different communities of the Archdeaconry, regularly visiting and sharing in the life and worship of local parishes, chaplaincies, fresh expressions and community projects
- Create and develop a ministry plan which will establish effective structures for mission in the Archdeaconry, including pastoral schemes and Bishop's Mission Orders
- Chair the Archdeaconry Steering Group in its remit for mission and ministry
- Work with the relevant Area Dean to support parishes and benefices through a vacancy, including an exit interview with the departing priest; ensuring there is good, honest reflection on the parish profile and overseeing the interview process in conjunction with the patron and parish representatives
- Induct and install newly appointed ministers
- Work with the Bishops in the pastoral care of the clergy and their families
- Conduct an interim review with the archdeaconry clergy on a three year cycle
- Admit Churchwardens to office at the annual Visitation service
- Ensure that safeguarding is embedded in church culture and that policies are properly implemented across the board

- Serve on appropriate diocesan bodies, helping with strategic planning:
  - Bishop's Leadership Team
  - Bishop's Council
  - Diocesan Synod
  - Archdeaconry Steering Group
  - Called to Grow Project Board
  - Clergy Houses Committee
  - Diocesan Advisory Committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Other committees from time to time
- To be a member of the College of Canons and to take an appropriate part in the life of the Cathedral
- Meet regularly with the Area Deans of the Archdeaconry, offering guidance and support to them, Deanery Lay Chairs, Churchwardens and other parish officers
- Relate well to borough, public, private and third sector leaders
- To undertake the statutory duties of an archdeacon as laid out in Canon C22 and other ecclesiastical legislation
- Address difficulties or disputes as they arise in parishes; to seek resolutions through advice and negotiation, but where necessary take formal action under the Clergy Disciplinary Measure and other legislation concerning the conduct of Clergy, Churchwardens and PCCs
- To undertake such other duties as the Bishop of Rochester may request

Ordinations at Rochester Cathedral

# THE PERSON

The Archdeacon of Rochester will be someone who displays the following characteristics:

- Is a disciple of Jesus Christ with a heart for the kingdom of God and is able to inspire others to follow Jesus more closely
- Is a loyal friend and colleague who has a genuine grasp of collegiality and the spiritual fruit of wisdom, patience and kindness
- Understands the Called Together priorities and can help imaginatively with their realisation in the places of the Archdeaconry and across the wider Diocese
- Preaches and leads worship in a way that inspires and deepens faith in God
- Understands the reality of urban life and ministry and is sympathetic with this
- Can innovate and lead for change, is adaptable, relishes problem solving and is a peaceable, astute presence in the middle of conflict
- Is enthusiastic about mission in parishes, chaplaincies, schools and the mixed ecology of Church
- Has good personal experience of leadership in parish life
- Is an able communicator, both orally and in writing
- Can chair meetings in a timely manner and with attention to core tasks
- Is competent in the digital settings of worship and collegial meetings
- Can manage projects and tasks and deliver these efficiently
- Has the capacity to understand ecclesiastical and other law as it relates to the ministry of an archdeacon
- Grasps complex documents, financial and legal reports in an effective way, contributing to their content and shape
- Be a credible public representative of the Church of England in wider society and with ecumenical and other partners
- Has the ability and willingness to drive up to 10,000 miles a year on archdeaconry business
- Models a healthy and balanced life, with a good sabbath rhythm that includes a weekly day of rest, and giving time to family, friends and recreation
- We are keen to increase the diversity of our Diocesan leadership team and would particularly encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds
- Is committed to addressing racial injustice in the church and in society

# KEY RELATIONSHIPS

## SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese of Rochester takes its safeguarding duties seriously and views a good safeguarding culture as the foundation of a flourishing Church. Archdeacons work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and usually chairs Safeguarding Core Groups within their archdeaconries. The role of Bishop's Safeguarding Lead is shared among the Archdeacons, changing every three years.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Diocesan teams work collaboratively and there are a series of relationships that will encourage and strengthen the ministry of the Archdeacon of Rochester In addition to an expected close working relationship with the Bishop of Rochester and the two other Archdeacons, further key partnerships include the Diocesan Secretary, the Finance Director, the Secretary to the DAC, the Director of Mission and Ministry Development, the Operations Management Team and the Diocesan Board of Education.

## EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

The Archdeacon of Rochester will be supported by a part time Executive Administrator.

# THE ARCHDEACON'S HOUSE

The Archdeaconry is the former Rectory of St Mary's Greenhithe situated 5 minutes drive from the A2 and Bluewater Shopping Centre and 10 minutes walk from Greenhithe train station, ASDA and the River Thames.

The property was built in the 1920s and the ground floor has a very good sized kitchen / breakfast room, dining room, lounge (with log burner), study, utility room and downstairs toilet. Upstairs there are five bedrooms (one with a recently fitted ensuite shower room), family bathroom and separate toilet. Outside the garden includes lawn, terraced flower beds, two sheds, greenhouse and henhouse. There is reserved parking in the church car park.

The current location of the archdeaconry could be reviewed in future to ensure it best meets the missional and pastoral needs of the Archdeaconry of Rochester.

The game of bowls at St Augustine, Gillingham

# OUR DIOCESE – THE WIDER CONTEXT

Rochester Diocese covers the areas of Medway, north west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley; a historic diocese in existence since 604AD

A diverse and vibrant community of faith, we share the vision that we are Called Together to change, serve and grow the church in this place.

The wealth of cultures in the Diocese is huge. The benefits, actual and potential, for mission and ministry flow from this rich mix; a mix which represents some of the most prosperous and poorest areas of the country. Because of this, we either have some of the biggest challenges or, as we see it, some of the best opportunities for growing God's Kingdom.

Our three archdeaconries of Bromley and Bexley, Rochester, and Tonbridge, characterise the increasing diversity found across our Diocese of varying kinds. Ethnic diversity is a growing feature of our communities, and this is reflected in many of our congregations. Diocesan-level world Church partnerships are an important component of life.

With the expansion of London and adjoining communities, we are increasingly urban and suburban, yet still retain places which see themselves as rural.

## OUR ARCHDEACONRIES

One of the strengths of the shape of the Diocese is its archdeaconries. Each has significant internal coherence, with each one relating fairly naturally to a particular piece of civic, social, or economic geography.

Although the smallest in terms of geographical area, the Archdeaconry of Bromley and Bexley is the most densely populated, with around 40 per cent of the total population of the Diocese living within it.

Our most rural archdeaconry, the Archdeaconry of Tonbridge, has a number of larger congregations, particularly in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, and Sevenoaks, but there are also congregations serving some relatively small rural communities.

Rochester Archdeaconry covers the Medway towns, incorporating local campuses for three universities (Kent, Canterbury Christ Church, and Greenwich) and the Ebbsfleet Garden City development – one of the biggest single housing developments in England.

## OUR MINISTRY

We serve a population of some 1.3 million people which is likely to increase by another 200,000 over the next 15 years or so, having increased by 100,000 in recent years. We seek to be a Church that reflects the diversity of our communities both in our membership and in our leaders, and one that is a safe and welcoming space where all can flourish and be valued.

Serving this community we have approximately:

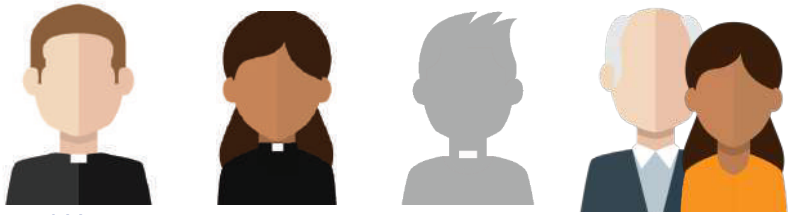
- 151 fulltime equivalent substantive stipendiary parochial posts,
- 29 substantive self-supporting posts: and,
- at any one time 28 stipendiary and self-supporting curates in training.

We believe that all Christian people have a calling from God to know and love him more, and to serve others in his name.

Indeed, we are recognised nationally as a leader in lay vocation, particularly for our creative approach to the variety, scope and training of Licensed Lay Ministers, which is unique to our Diocese.

As well as a range of discipleship and prayer courses and materials, our Diocese has pioneered opportunities in Anna Chaplaincy, which has a special focus on those who have dementia and other end of life issues.

Numerous licensed clergy and lay ministers serve as chaplains, and in diocesan and cathedral roles.



Funky Fridays at St Francis, Strood

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